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ABSTRACT

In 1870, after the successful publication of "War and Peace," Leo Tolstoy began imagining a story about a high-born society woman, "Anna Karenina," who destroys her life by having an adulterous affair. By presenting his adulteress as a sympathetic character, Tolstoy aimed to expose injustices in such Russian institutions as government, urban aristocratic society, and the Russian Orthodox Church. He also intended to portray his own ideal of a meaningful life. This teacher's guide contains strategies for viewing and suggests pre-viewing and post-viewing activities and discussion topics for the two-episode television film of "Anna Karenina," as well as background and biographical material. The guide offers an essay, "Tolstoy: Life as Russian History" about the author's life and another essay, "The Woman Question," about the situation of women in 19th-century Russia. It also presents a section, "Looking at Film," which outlines the process and problems of turning a novel into a screenplay, and which can be used with the "Masterpiece Theatre" Web site. (NKA)

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ED 459 466

A Teacher's Guide for

Anna Karenina

ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre

Premieres
February 18–25, 2001
on PBS

Fully funded by
ExxonMobil

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Kenneth P. Cohen
Vice President
Public Affairs

ExxonMobil

Dear Educator,

Once again, we are pleased to provide you with a teacher's guide to accompany EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE. Our program focus for this guide is *Anna Karenina*, an adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's classic novel, premiering on EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE, Sundays, February 18–25, on PBS.

Our previous teachers' guides have been well received, and we believe you will find the *Anna Karenina* guide to be another useful tool filled with ideas to inspire and challenge your students. I encourage you to visit our state-of-the-art Web site at www.pbs.org/masterpiece, which provides additional educational resources and classroom ideas.

Your feedback on our EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE educational outreach efforts is very important to us. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve our teachers' guides, or would like to share how these materials were beneficial in your classroom, please write to me at EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE; 5959 Las Colinas Boulevard; Irving, Texas 75039. We appreciate your input and applaud your efforts to bring the classics to life for your students.

Kenneth P. Cohen
Vice President, Public Affairs

A Teacher's Guide for

Anna Karenina

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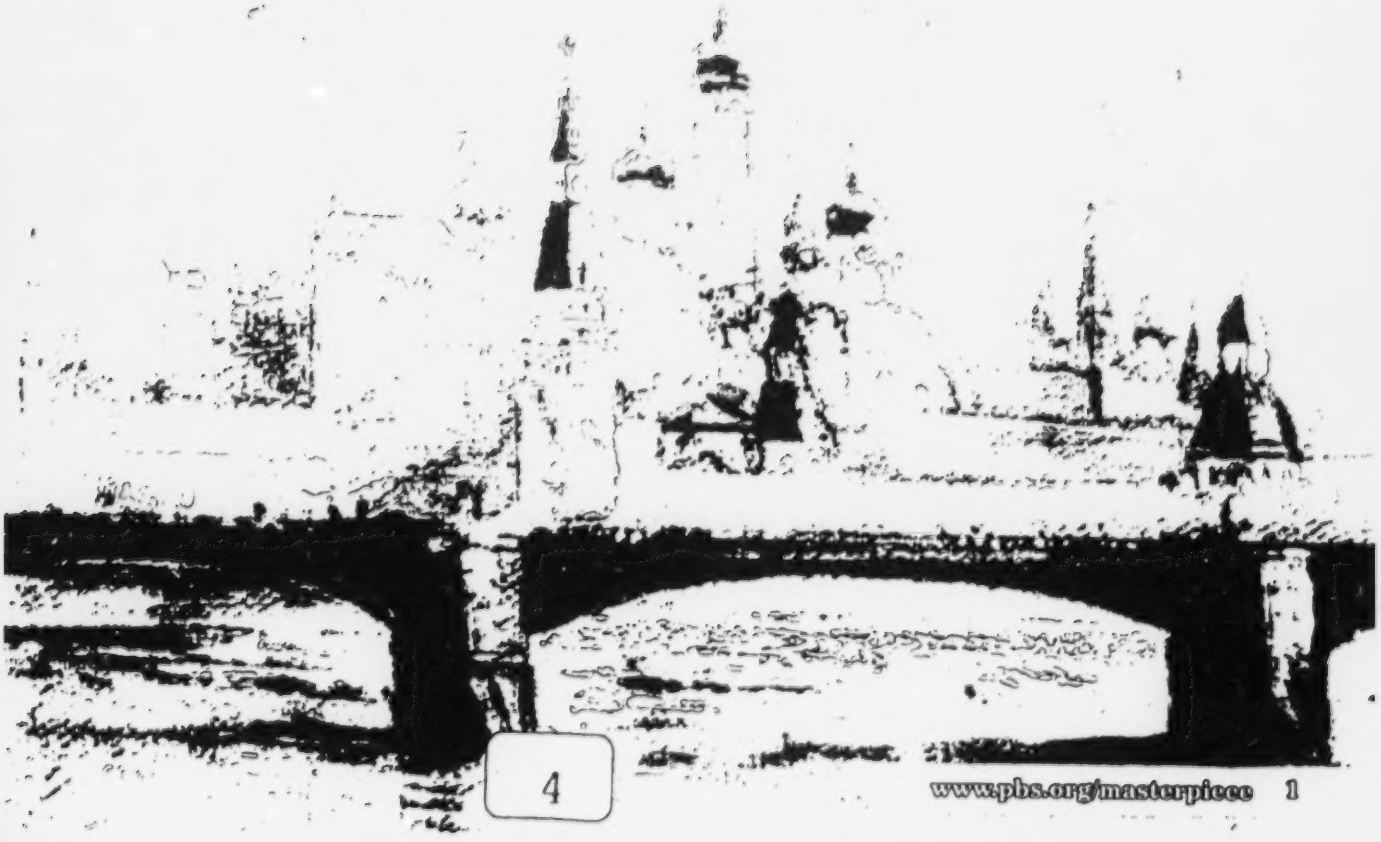

Using Anna Karenina

Broadcast Schedule

The two 2-hour episodes of *Anna Karenina* will air on most PBS stations from 9:00 PM to 11:00 PM EST. Check local listings or call your local public television station for broadcast and repeat dates and times in your area.

Episode I Sunday, February 18*

Episode II Sunday, February 25*

* Note: *Anna Karenina* will air on Mondays in Atlanta, Cleveland, Orlando, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, and San Diego.

Off-Air Taping Rights

Educators may tape *Anna Karenina* and use it in the classroom for one year after broadcast.

About the Web Site

Check out the MASTERPIECE THEATRE Web site for more resources to supplement your study of *Anna Karenina*. You will find background information about the novel and Tolstoy, a time line of Tolstoy's life in the context of Russian and world history, descriptions of the characters, and the "Novel to Screen" section, which allows you to compare Tolstoy's text with the screenplay adaptation and the actual video.

Purchasing Videocassettes

To purchase videos of *Anna Karenina* (item WG1084, $29.95), contact WGBH Boston Video at (800) 949-8670. For additional EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE videos, see page 17.

Ordering Additional Guides

To order additional teachers' guides, contact:
Anna Karenina Guide
WGBH Educational Print and Outreach
125 Western Avenue
Boston, MA 02134
e-mail: WGBH_Materials_Request@wgbh.org

MASTERPIECE THEATRE Schedule

Also airing this season are *Wives and Daughters*, a four-part adaptation of Elizabeth Gaskell's novel, and Willa Cather's *Song of the Lark*, a presentation of EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE'S AMERICAN COLLECTION. For up-to-date schedule information, check the series Web site and sign up for the e-mail newsletter.

Comments?

We would love to hear what you think about this guide and the Web site. Write to us at:
Anna Karenina Feedback
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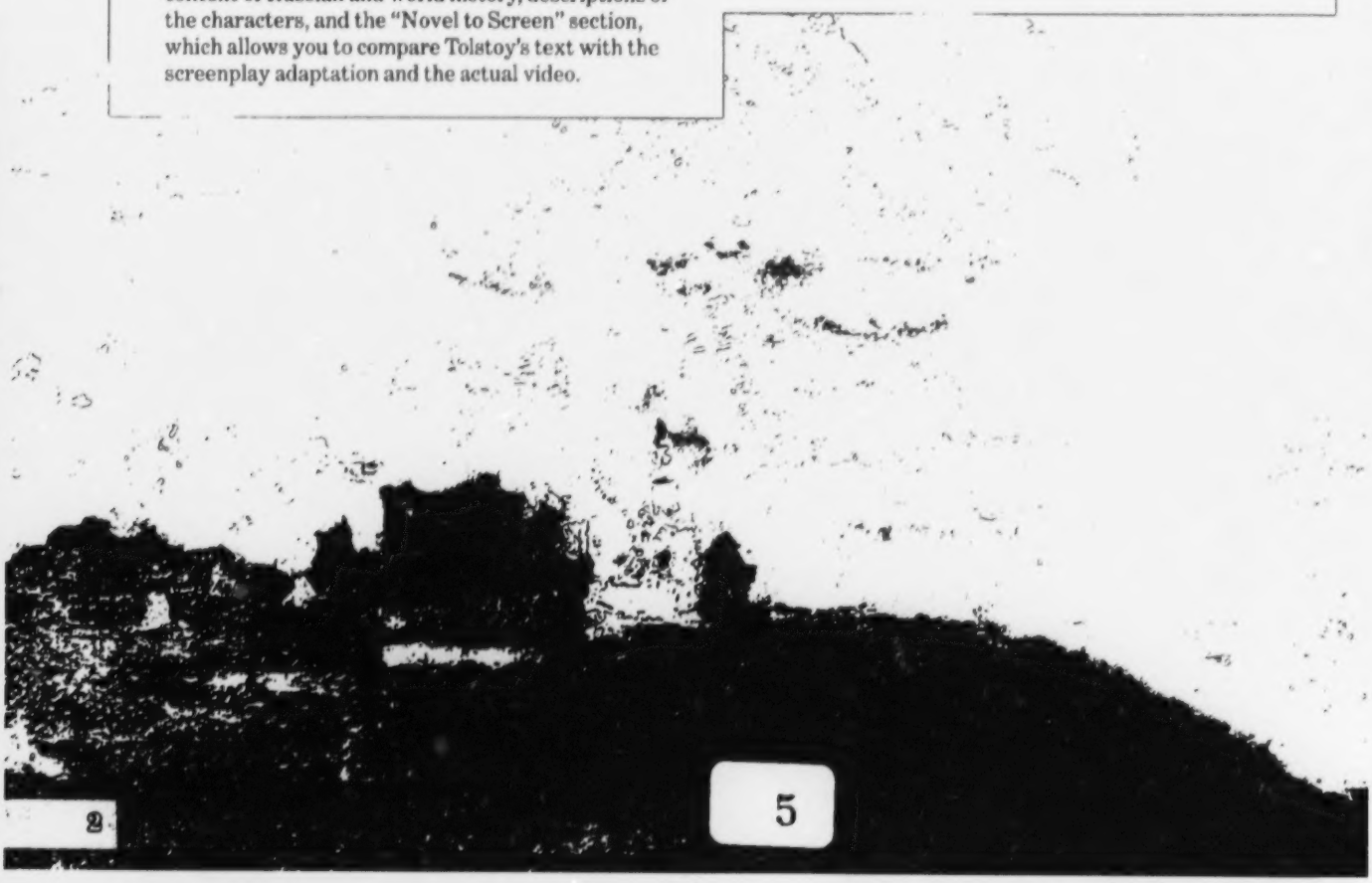


Tolstoy's Struggle

Author Leo Tolstoy spent a lifetime looking for patterns of meaning in life and struggling with how to express them, both in his writing and his actions. The story behind *Anna Karenina* is a prime example of this search.

In 1870, after the successful publication of *War and Peace*, Tolstoy began imagining a story about a high-born society woman who destroys her life by having an adulterous affair. Tolstoy's problem, he told his wife Sonya (who recorded it in her diary), was how "to present this woman as not guilty but merely pitiful." An adulteress as a sympathetic character was in those days most rare. In doing so, Tolstoy aimed to expose injustices in such Russian institutions as government, urban aristocratic society, and the Russian Orthodox Church. He also intended to portray his own ideal of a meaningful life.

Tolstoy didn't start right away. Between 1870 and 1873, he opened a school for peasant children at his estate, Yasnaya Polyana, and bought another estate in Samara Province (east of the Volga), which he turned into a stud farm. Also during this time, he wrote his famous textbook, *Azbuka* (*ABC*), began a second book for schoolchildren, and worked on a novel about Peter the Great, ultimately growing weary of the subject.

In March 1873, Tolstoy began reading a book of stories by the great Russian author Alexander Pushkin, and was suddenly inspired by an opening sentence: "The guests were getting ready to leave for the country house." He told his wife excitedly, "That's the way for us to write! Anyone else would start by describing the guests, the rooms, but he jumped straight into the action." Tolstoy began *Anna Karenina* that night.

In twelve months, Tolstoy had a thick manuscript with Part I in final draft. He spent much time reworking each part five or six times, with Sonya copying out the final versions. On December 21, 1874, Tolstoy sent Katkov, the editor of the *Russky Vestnik* (*Russian Messenger*), the first pages of *Anna Karenina*. Katkov serialized the novel from 1874 through 1877, receiving sections from Tolstoy throughout this time.

After his initial push on the novel, Tolstoy slowed down, greatly affected by several deaths in his family, including three children, a niece, and two aunts. He was also distracted by other pursuits. Sonya complained to her father that Tolstoy was obsessed with the educational needs of his peasants, much to the detriment of finishing *Anna Karenina*.

But there was something else that slowed Tolstoy. In this period he began to experience his "conversion," in which he denounced Russian society and the Russian Orthodox Church in favor of a more humble and just existence. Tolstoy now took to heart Christ's words on nonresistance, believing all violence to be evil. He also felt that the only life worth living was an ascetic one, and he eventually gave up all property, became a vegetarian, and practiced celibacy. Anna's story, one of aristocracy, became worthless to him. In November 1875, Tolstoy wrote to his friend N. N. Strakhov: "My God, if only someone would finish *Anna Karenina* for me. Unbearably repulsive."

Tolstoy's pacifist views are evident in the last few pages of the novel, where he condemns the Turkish–Serbian–Russian war. His editor saw these views as unpatriotic and therefore unpublishable. Katkov asked for changes; Tolstoy refused. In the end, Katkov finished serialization by publishing only a summary of the last part of the book. Tolstoy later published the last part in a separate edition of the novel.

In 1880, Tolstoy wrote to an admirer, "Concerning *Anna Karenina*: I assure you that this abomination no longer exists for me, and I am only vexed because there are people for whom this sort of thing is necessary."

(For additional background essays on Tolstoy and *Anna Karenina*, see pages 12–15.)

Viewing Strategies

Before-Viewing Notes

- This film contains partial nudity and has not been edited for classroom use. You should preview the film before assigning it to your students to watch.
- Refer to the ideas for student viewing journals on page 6. Also read the essays on pages 3 and 12–15, although you may choose not to share them with students until after they view the film.

Episode I Airs Sunday, February 18, 2001*

Plot Synopsis

Anna Karenina, the wife of a prominent government official in the Russian capital of St. Petersburg, travels by train to Moscow to pay a visit to her brother, Stiva Oblonsky, and his wife, Dolly. Stiva has been unfaithful to Dolly with their children's governess, and Anna hopes to help reconcile the couple. En route, she travels with the Countess Vronskaya and meets her son, Alexey Vronsky. Though they meet only briefly, Anna and Vronsky are fascinated with one another.

At the same time, Constantine Levin arrives in Moscow from his country estate with the intention of proposing marriage to Kitty Scherbatsky, Dolly's sister. He proposes, but Kitty turns him down because she is infatuated with Vronsky, who has been a frequent and attentive visitor at the Scherbatsky home. Levin is devastated, and returns home to the country to throw himself into his work on the estate.

Anna and Kitty attend a society ball, where Vronsky dances with them both. His attentions to Anna are painful to Kitty, and Anna and Vronsky make their mutual attraction obvious. They kiss, and Anna determines she will return to St. Petersburg to her husband and son and forget him. Vronsky follows her on the train home and declares his feelings for her, more convinced he can win her over after meeting her cool-mannered husband, Karenin, at the station. Vronsky seeks her out at every opportunity and invites her to come to him. Despite her resolve and reservations, Anna goes to his apartment and becomes his lover.

Levin works the harvest at his farm and tries to find satisfaction and meaning in his life without Kitty. She has been ill, in misery over Vronsky's rejection of her and her rejection of Levin, who she now knows she loves. Levin sees her pass in a carriage and realizes that his love for her is the center of his life. He avoids her in the country, fearing rejection. Back in Moscow the next season, however, they meet, and Levin proposes to her and is accepted.

Anna and Vronsky carry on their affair in St. Petersburg, meeting at the home of Vronsky's aristocratic cousin Betsy. Hearing gossip, Karenin observes them there and warns Anna to behave in a more socially acceptable way. Anna, now pregnant, sees that Karenin cares only for appearances, and confesses her love for Vronsky to her husband. Instead of leaving or divorcing her, Karenin insists Anna stay in the marriage and not see Vronsky in their home. He tells her she cannot leave him and have any hope of seeing her son, Seriozha, again. Anna continues her affair with Vronsky, but finds her situation unbearable.

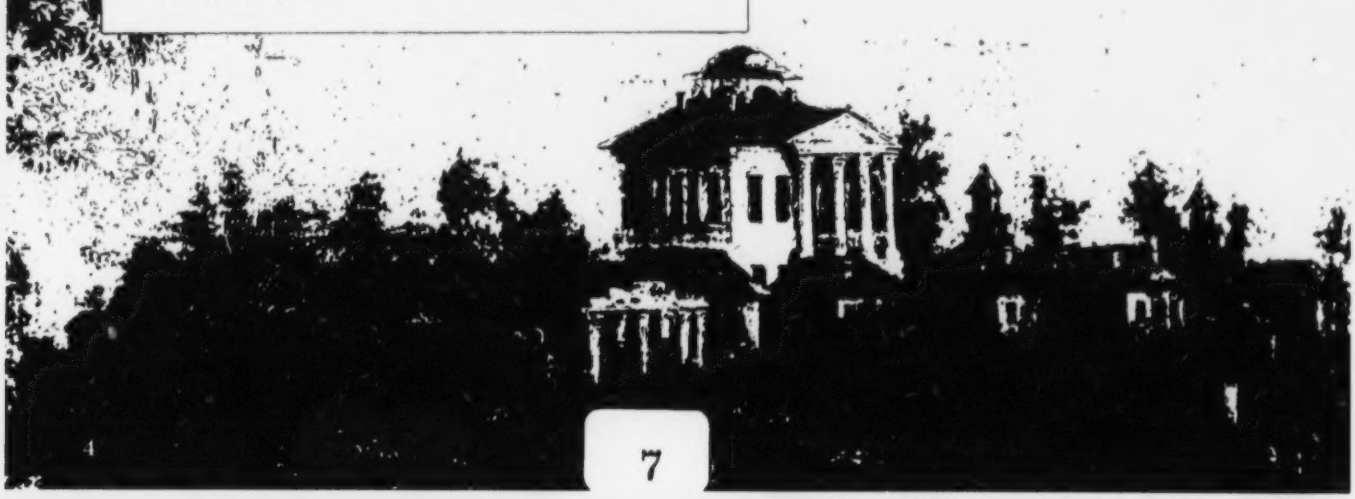
Anna nearly dies after giving birth to a daughter, and in a state of delirium she calls for Karenin and asks his forgiveness, saying it was "another Anna, not your Anna" who gave her heart to Vronsky. Karenin, stripped for the moment of his concern with social opinion, feels deep compassion and forgives her. Anna calls Vronsky into the room and insists that the two men reconcile. They grasp hands. Vronsky, in despair, returns to his apartment and attempts suicide.

Suggested Viewing Segments

Day 1 43 minutes
Start: Episode opening
End: Anna on horseback, calls to her son

Day 2 36 minutes
Start: Princess Betsy's
End: Levin fights with his brother Nikolai

Day 3 33 minutes
Start: Anna and Karenin at breakfast
End: Conclusion of episode



Episode II Airs Sunday, February 25, 2001*

Plot Synopsis

Levin and Kitty prepare for their wedding. Levin, who struggles with his faith in God, must take confession. He resolves to tell Kitty about all his past sins. Still amazed that she could love him, he offers to let her back out, but she refuses, and they marry. The couple create a home together in the country, and Kitty surprises Levin with her strength as she attends to his dying brother, Nikolai, in a squalid hotel in a remote town. In Moscow, after a long labor, Kitty gives birth to a son.

Anna, recovered from illness, is miserable at home with her husband, despite his acts of forgiveness and devotion. Karenin offers her a divorce, but she cannot accept the disgrace it will cause him. She leaves the country with Vronsky and their young daughter. The three live together in Italy but soon return to St. Petersburg. In her absence, Karenin's attitude toward his wife hardens under the influence of Countess Lydia, who now runs his household. She convinces Karenin to deny Anna's request to see her son. Anna sneaks into the house on Seriozha's birthday, but must leave when Karenin comes in. While Vronsky is welcomed in society, Anna is shunned. Her isolation and her yearning for her son leave her in despair and subject to fits of anger and jealousy.

Anna becomes increasingly desperate, demanding Vronsky's constant presence and taking opium while awaiting word from Karenin about a divorce. He tells Stiva a divorce would be wrong under God's law, and Anna becomes convinced that Vronsky is preparing to leave her for a society princess his mother favors. Her mental state deteriorates, and she follows Vronsky to the country by train. Arriving at the station, certain she has been abandoned by Vronsky, she throws herself onto the train tracks between two moving cars.

After Anna's death, Vronsky and Levin meet at the Moscow station. Vronsky has volunteered to fight in the Balkans in a conflict between Balkan Serbs and the ruling Turks. He no longer wishes to live. Shaken by the encounter, Levin returns home to Kitty, her family, and his infant son. He pauses to appreciate the richness of his own life, and Kitty reassures him that, despite his uncertainties, he is a good man.

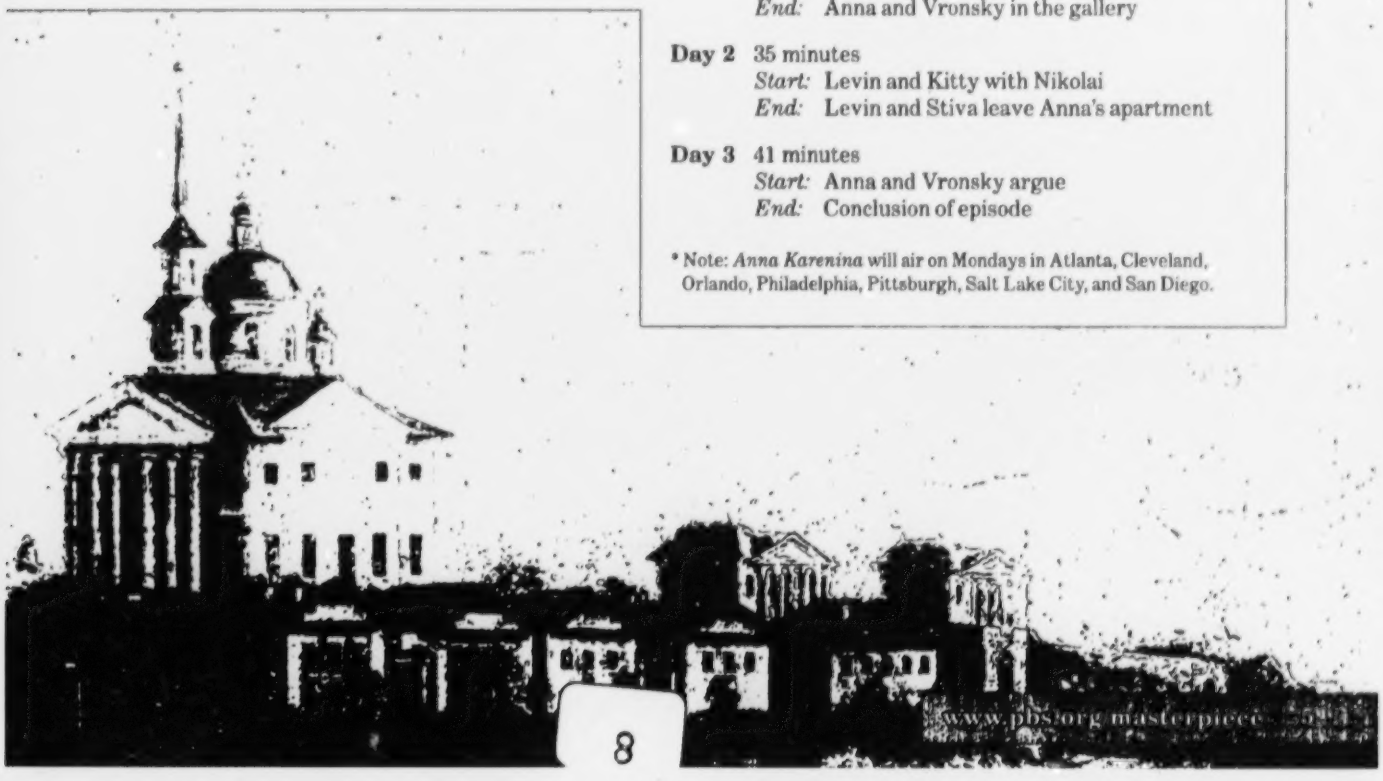
Suggested Viewing Segments

Day 1 36 minutes
Start: Episode opening
End: Anna and Vronsky in the gallery

Day 2 35 minutes
Start: Levin and Kitty with Nikolai
End: Levin and Stiva leave Anna's apartment

Day 3 41 minutes
Start: Anna and Vronsky argue
End: Conclusion of episode

* Note: *Anna Karenina* will air on Mondays in Atlanta, Cleveland, Orlando, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, and San Diego.



Viewing Journals

To help your students keep track of the plot during the four-hour film and to focus their viewing, you may want to have them keep a viewing journal of some kind. You can use one of the following formats or try one of your own.

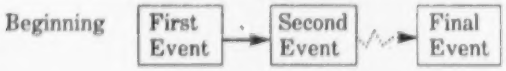
1. After each viewing session, have students spend five minutes writing down observations or plot summaries. Have students pay particular attention to crisis points. Before the next viewing, ask volunteers to read their entries.

2. To help compare and contrast the main characters, divide journal pages into four columns and track the parallel plot developments:

Anna	Kitty	Levin	Vronsky
Key Events	Key Events	Key Events	Key Events

3. Make a page for each character as he or she is introduced. During or after each episode, have students note the important events that happen to the characters, including conflicts, climaxes, and resolutions that affect them. They could also do this journal in two columns: students can record specific events in the left-hand column and their observations, interpretations, and analysis of the relevance of each event in the right, particularly in contrast to other characters.

4. After viewing, students can use their journals to create a Chain of Events graphic organizer.



They may want to create two separate chains of events, one for Levin and Kitty and one for Anna and Vronsky, which they then use to compare and contrast the development, progress, and resolution of each relationship.

Students can also review the "Who's Who" section of the Web site to help them keep track of the characters.

Discussion and Activities by Episode

Episode I

Before Viewing

Prepare students to compare their own world with Tolstoy's by discussing or writing about the following:

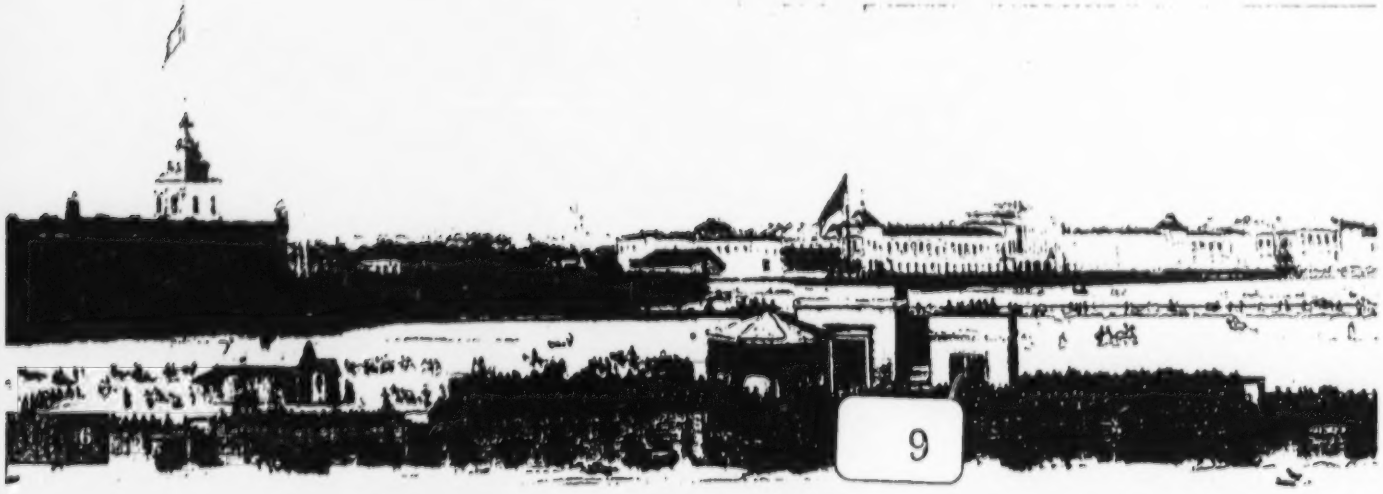
1. What is meant by social class? Do we live in a society with a strict class structure or a fluid one? Does the class we are born into determine where we will live, the work we will do, the person we will marry? (You may want to precede this discussion by distributing a survey which polls students on their ideas about class. The results of an anonymous survey can be enormously revealing and can spark interesting discussion.)

2. Discuss the meaning of gender equality. You way wish to have students read a suffragette speech, such as Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?", to begin the discussion. Do men and women enjoy equal rights and equal opportunity in our society today? List any inequalities students cite. Review the list: Which remain in place because of laws? Which persist as a result of social custom?

Post-Viewing Discussion

1. Use four adjectives to describe each of the main characters in Episode I: Anna, Karenin, Vronsky, Levin, Kitty, Stiva, Dolly.

2. Why is Anna attracted to Vronsky? What does she risk in giving in to her passion for him? Compare Anna's behavior with her brother Stiva's. What does Stiva risk? How does Tolstoy demonstrate the inequality between men and women in his time?



3. How is the relationship between Levin and Kitty different from that between Anna and Vronsky? How do the two story lines complement each other? (You may want to use a Venn diagram to help students organize their thinking.)

4. Were you surprised that Karenin forgave Anna in the final scene? Why did she ask for his forgiveness? Look back at the four adjectives you used to describe Karenin, Vronsky, and Anna. Which still apply?

5. The story of *Anna Karenina* turns on the overwhelming physical passion between Anna and Vronsky. Yet within the pages of Tolstoy's novel, there are no scenes of their love-making. When a friend and critic commended Tolstoy for leaving out "the details of the seduction," Tolstoy replied: "Even if I were to rewrite everything from the start a hundred times, in this place I wouldn't change anything."

In their "rewrite," the filmmakers added explicit scenes of passion. What do you think of their choice? Do these scenes make an important contribution to the story? Would the film be less effective without them? How does the change reflect a shift in sensibilities and expectations about art and sexual content? Why do you think Tolstoy insisted on leaving them out?

Post-Viewing Activity

1. How do you think the story will develop from here? Working in groups, have students write a plot summary for the second episode of *Anna Karenina*. Be sure to refer to all the story lines developed in Episode I. Students should pay particular attention to points of conflict which occur in Episode I and think about how they may resolve in Episode II.

Episode II

Post-Viewing Discussion

1. What does Kitty teach Levin about love and marriage? Cite specific scenes. How does Kitty's definition of love contrast with Anna's?

2. How does Anna's reception back in St. Petersburg show the hypocrisy of aristocratic society? Compare Anna's position with Vronsky's and Princess Betsy's.

3. What techniques are used to show viewers the deterioration of Anna's mental state? Consider acting, music and sound, and camera techniques.

4. Is Vronsky a sympathetic or unsympathetic character in Episode II? How are Vronsky and Levin, who meet twice in this episode, like and unlike?

5. In each of the marriages portrayed in *Anna Karenina* (Anna and Karenin, Dolly and Oblonsky, Kitty and Levin), one partner asks the other for forgiveness. Discuss these scenes and the repercussions. What is the result for each individual and each relationship? What should be the role and nature of sacrifice and forgiveness in a marriage? When does it lead to greater understanding and intimacy and when is it destructive?

6. Have students look back at the adjectives they used to describe the main characters after viewing Episode I. Would they change any of their descriptions? Share with students how the actors describe their characters in the electronic version of the teacher's guide on the Web site. Did the actors' portrayals reflect their understanding of their characters?

7. What do you think Kitty means when she tells Levin "you think too much. What counts is what's in here"? Is the lesson of *Anna Karenina* that you should follow your heart? Isn't that what Anna did? What is Tolstoy saying about how to live?

Post-Viewing Activities

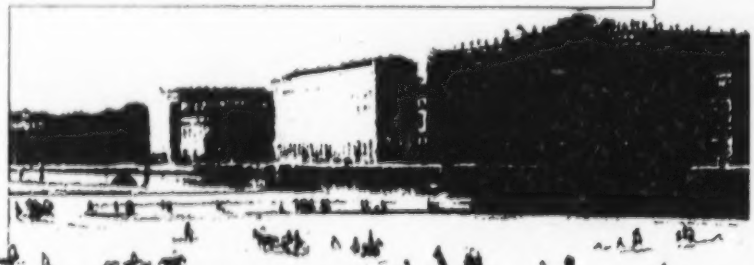
1. Replay for students consecutive scenes in which Dolly travels from Kitty's country home to Anna and Vronsky's, then back again.

Start: "The Scherbatskys are invading" (around 55 minutes in)
End: Dolly embraces her children (about 64 minutes in)

Contrast the two locations. How is Anna's home different from Kitty's? How does the meeting between Dolly and Anna mirror their meeting in the opening scenes of the film? What does Dolly see in Anna's life that she envies? What does she have that Anna does not? Who would you rather be, and why? How does the contrast between Dolly and Anna that Tolstoy creates in these scenes develop the themes of love, marriage, and family?

2. Compare the central male characters: Vronsky, Levin, Oblonsky, and Karenin. On the board, list the strengths and weaknesses of each. Which character do students most admire and why? How do assessments of what is a strength and what is a weakness differ when discussing male versus female characters?

3. In the opening line to *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy writes, "Happy families are all alike. Every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Write a persuasive essay in which you agree or disagree with Tolstoy's statement. What do you think Tolstoy meant by it? Does the story bear it out? Do you agree with this sentiment? (For an instructional rubric to help students (and you) evaluate their essays, see the teacher's guide on the Web site.)



After-Viewing Activities

1. Literary comparisons

The large themes in *Anna Karenina*—love, passion, guilt, marriage, family, hypocrisy, the search for spiritual and moral understanding—are recurrent themes in many of the great works of world literature. What other novels or plays came to mind as you watched the film? Identify one work you know well that shares a theme with Tolstoy's work and compare it with *Anna Karenina*. Create a two-column chart headed by the title and author of each work. Then record answers to the following:

- What is the theme?
- How does each writer present the theme? (plot, scenes)
- Who does the writer use to present it? (characters)
- What commentary does each work offer on the theme?
- Which work explores the theme more powerfully or fully?

Suggested comparisons

- Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*, Henrik Ibsen's *The Doll House*, or Maxine Kingston's *Woman Warrior:* the conflict between a woman's desire for greater self-actualization and what society allows
- Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment:* guilt, the search for moral understanding, Levin versus Raskolnikov
- Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet:* unreasoning passion, families, social obstacles to love
- Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* or *Ethan Frome*, or Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary:* marriage as a social institution, forbidden love, social restrictions
- Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter:* sin, guilt and retribution, hypocrisy and double standards, Hester versus Anna.

2. Women's roles/women's rights

Distribute copies of "The Woman Question" on pages 14–15. Now discuss the status of women in 19th-century Russia using Anna as a case study. What does Anna's daily life consist of? What opportunities and experiences are open to her? How are her choices limited by the culture and laws of her time? How much is Anna's fate in the novel a consequence of the position of women in 19th-century Russia?

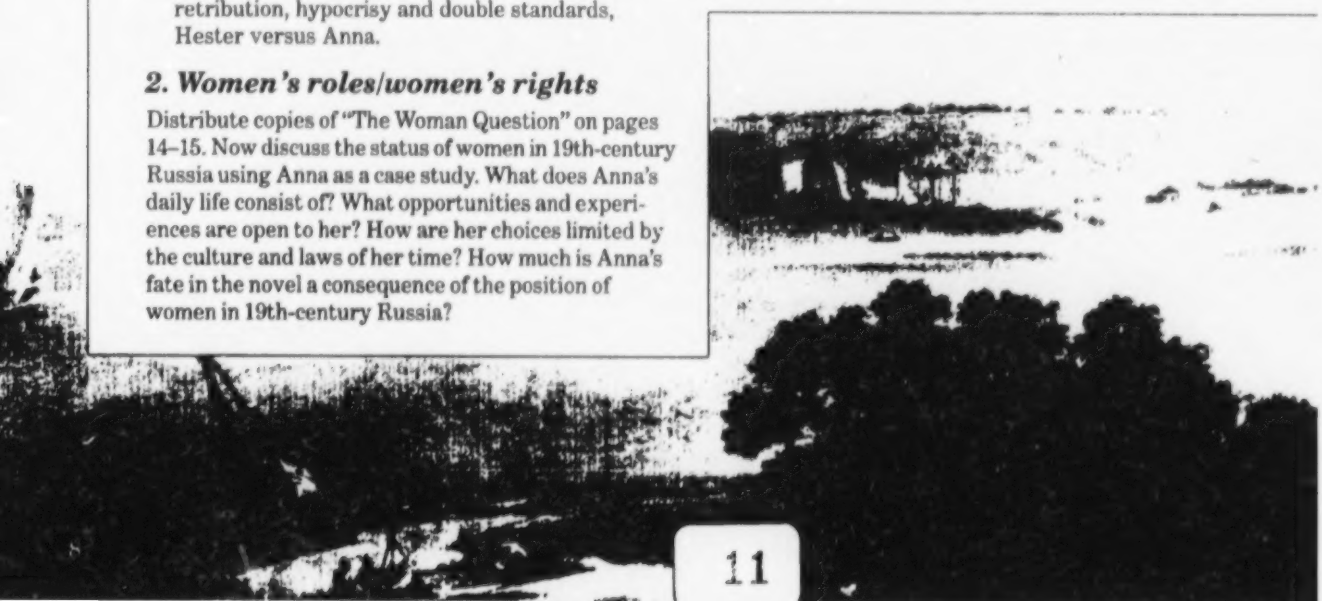
Follow-up: Imagine a version of the Anna story set in 21st-century America. Would the plot follow the same course? Why or why not? Write the summary "teaser" that would appear on the inside jacket of the newly published *Anna Karenina* 2001.

3. The challenge of marriage

The plot lines in *Anna Karenina* follow the course of three marriages: one falling apart (Anna and Karenin), another being built (Levin and Kitty), and the third carrying on through a series of problems (Dolly and Stiva). Readers of Tolstoy's popular serial novel were challenged to think about the way marriages were made and conducted in their society.

Although marriage remains an important theme in our contemporary literature, most of us are more likely to be exposed to discussions about marriage through television and other media. Take Tolstoy's couples out of his novel and drop them into the context of a modern, American-style talk show. (You might want to distribute copies of "The Woman Question" on pages 14–15 as background.)

- Select a pair of characters as guests: Anna and Karenin, Levin and Kitty, or Dolly and Stiva.
- Create a title for the show.
- Script the host's introductory remarks. Describe the marriage and the issues to be explored, and name the guests, including any outside experts, friends, or family who will appear on stage.
- Write the transcript of a short selection from the show. *Ideas:* a guest might tell an anecdote, share a moment of understanding (happy or unhappy) with the spouse, or take part in a question-and-answer session with an expert.
- Record what happens when a "surprise guest," Leo Tolstoy, comes on stage to meet the characters he created. What commentary will he offer on marriage? What does he think should be the connection between love and marriage? What will he say to the couple? When asked, what will Tolstoy say he believes the basis of marriage should be?



4. The ideal of family

As outlined in "Tolstoy's Struggle" on page 3 and "Tolstoy: Life as Russian History" on pages 12–13, Tolstoy wrote *Anna Karenina* at a time when he was searching to understand the basis of a good and moral life amidst the pressures and hypocrisy of contemporary society. In his novel, he explores the idea that devotion to family and family love can lead us toward a moral life. How do the characters he created demonstrate this notion? Try this exercise:

- Name two characters who, in your view, make the best choices and show the soundest moral judgment.
- Then name the two characters who have the strongest sense of family and family love.
- Do your lists line up? If so, what connection do you see between the characters' attitudes toward family and their ability to make good choices?
- Flip the question: Which two characters make the worst choices? Which two have the weakest understanding or experience of the value of family love? What relationship do you see here?

5. Passing judgment

Anna has presented a problem for both readers and critics since the publication of Tolstoy's novel. The heroine is a vital, appealing woman who abandons her husband and child to pursue her passion for another man. How are readers meant to react? Does Anna's history offer a lesson in the perils of adultery or does her example instruct us in the importance of compassion and forgiveness?

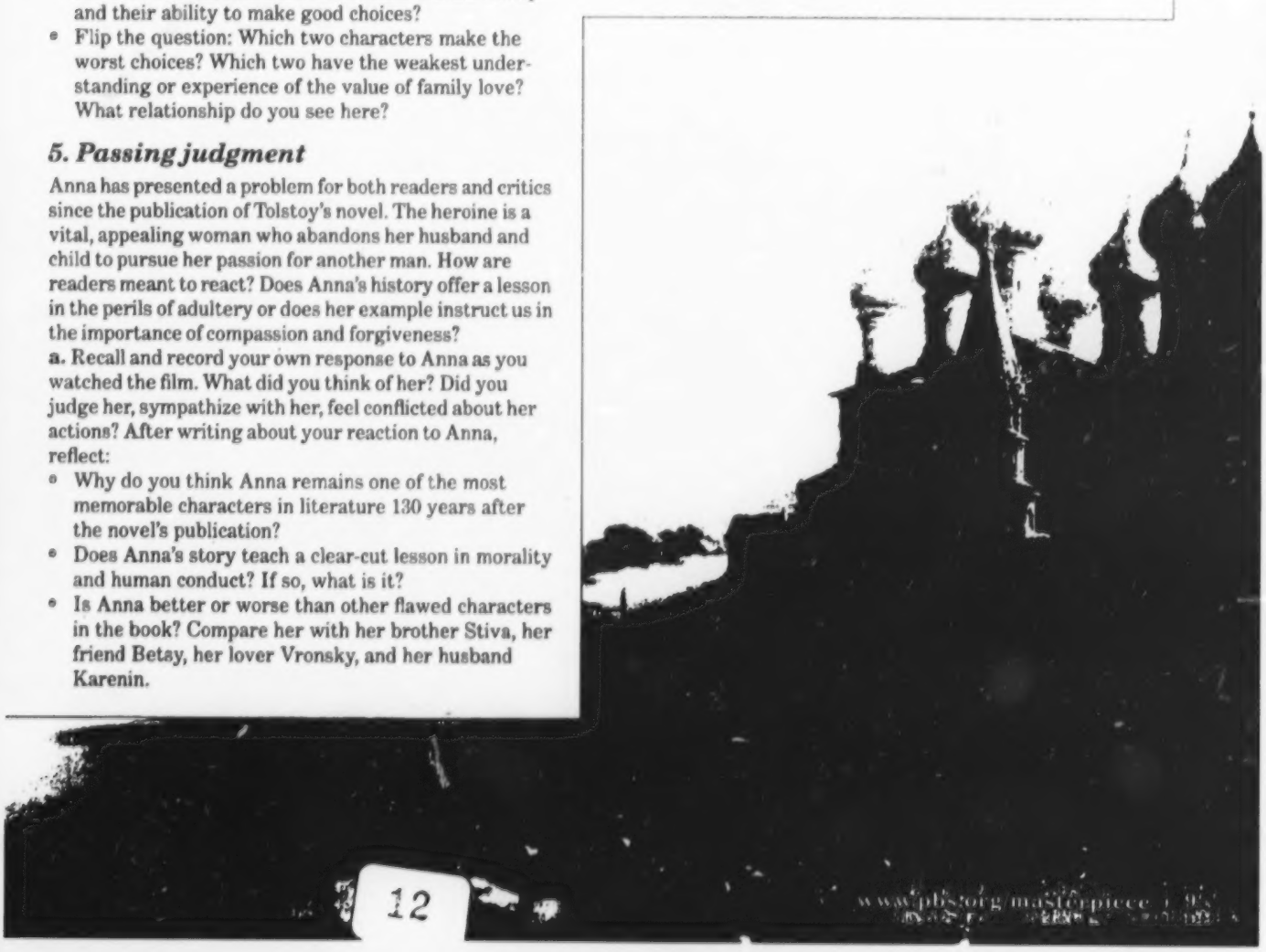
a. Recall and record your own response to Anna as you watched the film. What did you think of her? Did you judge her, sympathize with her, feel conflicted about her actions? After writing about your reaction to Anna, reflect:

- Why do you think Anna remains one of the most memorable characters in literature 130 years after the novel's publication?
- Does Anna's story teach a clear-cut lesson in morality and human conduct? If so, what is it?
- Is Anna better or worse than other flawed characters in the book? Compare her with her brother Stiva, her friend Betsy, her lover Vronsky, and her husband Karenin.

b. Tolstoy scholar Boris Eikhenbaum observes that the characters in *Anna Karenina* are "distributed on a kind of moral ladder." Distribute index cards to students. Ask them to write the name of each major character on a card and arrange the cards on their desks up and down a "moral ladder." Have one student display cards on the board arranged in order. Invite others to step up and rearrange them, offering a rationale for their judgment. Work toward a class consensus.

6. The value of art

Throughout his adult life, Leo Tolstoy struggled to understand the basis for morality, human nature, and human conduct. Each of his novels is an expression of his thinking at the time of writing, an attempt to use the art of the novel to pose the difficult questions we all struggle with and to offer tentative answers to them. By the end of his life, Tolstoy himself rejected art as a means of deepening moral understanding. What do you think? Using the film version of *Anna Karenina* as a starting point, make an argument for or against the power of the literary arts (fiction, drama, film) to help us understand how to live. What did you take away from *Anna Karenina*? How have other works you have read or seen influenced your own understanding and behavior?



Looking at Film

I. Novel to Screen

Turning a novel into a screenplay is not as easy as pulling dialogue from the pages of a book. Ask students to consider an example: Open to a page from any novel. How much of the text is dialogue? How much is narration? If you were to cut out the narration from the page in front of you, what would be lost? What does the narration show you about character, setting, and action that dialogue alone cannot?

In the writing of Tolstoy, we come to know his characters best not through what they say, but through what is said about them in the narration. What happens when the narrator disappears? Dialogue cannot do it all; the director, cast, and crew must use all the elements of film to transfer to the screen what a narrator provides on the page: setting, tone, point of view, and unspoken thoughts and emotions.

Study the adaptation process through three selections in the "Novel to Screen" section of the Web site. Copy and distribute the text from the novel and then the corresponding script. Finally, view the video clip from the film.

Point of View: The Ball

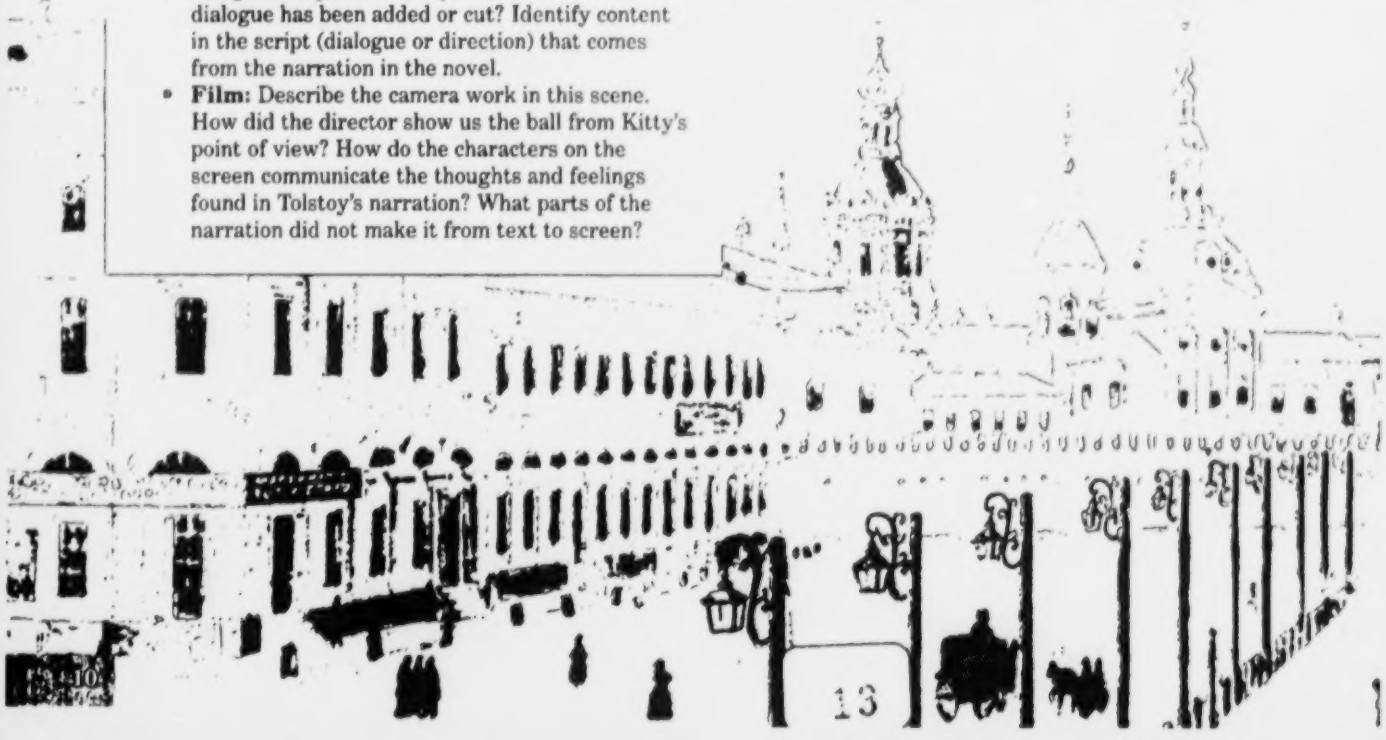
- **Novel:** Whose point of view does the narrator give? What does Kitty observe? Why do you think Tolstoy wrote the scene this way?
- **Script:** Compare the script with the novel. What dialogue has been added or cut? Identify content in the script (dialogue or direction) that comes from the narration in the novel.
- **Film:** Describe the camera work in this scene. How did the director show us the ball from Kitty's point of view? How do the characters on the screen communicate the thoughts and feelings found in Tolstoy's narration? What parts of the narration did not make it from text to screen?

Action and Gesture: The Race

- **Novel:** How does Tolstoy show you what Anna and Karenin are feeling during the race?
- **Script:** What pieces of dialogue and direction come directly from the novel? Was any dialogue cut?
- **Film:** What do the actors communicate to the viewer and to each other through gestures and expressions? Are their actions and reactions drawn from the novel? Cite specific lines.
- **Editing:** In the novel, the steeplechase is narrated in two separate chapters: one from the spectator's point of view in the stands (Part II, Chapter 28), the other from Vronsky's point of view on the back of the horse (Part II, Chapter 25). How did the filmmakers fold the two perspectives together? Was it done effectively?

Thoughts and Feelings: Levin's Doubts

- **Novel:** How does Levin's thinking lead him to doubt Kitty's love for him?
- **Script:** What changes has the screenwriter made in these scenes?
  Why do you think he has Levin discussing freedom and marriage with Stiva? How are Levin's thoughts translated onto the screen? Find lines of dialogue in the script that are drawn from narration in the novel.
- **Film:** What is the effect of the "drunken camera work" in the club scene? Does Douglas Henshall, who plays Levin, manage to convey the character's feelings of confusion, doubt, and reassurance?



II. Adapting Plot

In the 1935 version of *Anna Karenina* starring Greta Garbo, the screenwriters dropped the Levin and Kitty story line, choosing to focus on Anna's story alone (Levin appears only briefly as a minor character). The movie's running time may not have been the only consideration: the connection between the two plot lines has not always been well understood or applauded.

After the novel's publication, Tolstoy defended his use of a double story line: "Your opinion about *Anna Karenina* seems wrong to me," he wrote to a critical friend, S.A. Rachinsky. "On the contrary, I take pride in the architectônics.... The unity in the structure is created not by action and not by relationships between the characters, but by an inner continuity."

The MASTERPIECE THEATRE version leaves the two story lines intact. Analyze this adaptation defending or critiquing the double-plot structure. How do the two story lines relate to one another? Where is the "inner continuity"? Does the juggling of story lines work, or do the story lines seem as if they're from separate movies? (To help you form an opinion, imagine the film without the Levin and Kitty story, or rent the 1935 version and compare the two.)

III. Technique and Technical Effects

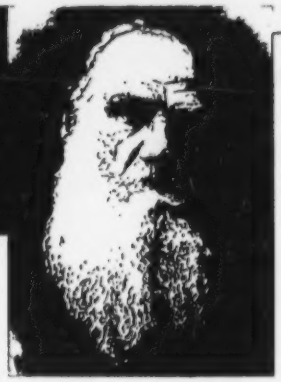
Replay a scene from the film that is at least two minutes in length, or assign students to view the film clips in the "Novel to Screen" section of the Web site.

- **Lighting:** Observe carefully how the shots in the selection are lit. What is the source of the light? How bright or intense is it? Does the lighting highlight or obscure the set and costume details and the actors' expressions? How does the lighting contribute to the mood or spirit of the scene?
- **Soundtrack:** Close your eyes and listen to the film clip as it plays. What do you hear besides dialogue? As you listen, draw a line graph tracking the intensity of the music and sound effects.

  Look at your graph. What can you guess about the action or emotions in the scene?

  Now turn off the sound and view silent film. Make another line graph showing the intensity of the action based on visual cues. Compare the two graphs and watch the scene with the sound turned back on. What do the sound and music contribute to the effect of the scene? Do the sound track and the filmed action work well together? What can a filmmaker use sound and music to do?
- **Camera work**: What do you notice about the camera work in the clip? What different angles are used (the position of the camera relative to the subject)? Where are the shots focused (foreground, background)? How tight are the shots (wide angle, close-up)? Is the camera steady or in motion? Examine two shots in detail. Why do you think the director and cinematographer made the choices they did? How can camera work help tell a story?

Tolstoy: Life as Russian History



Without knowing why I am and why I am here, life is impossible."

—Leo Tolstoy

In *Anna Karenina*, Leo Tolstoy not only relates a telling portrait of Russian society in the second half of the 19th century, but also mirrors his own personal transformations during this time. Tolstoy expresses his beliefs and actions through his character Levin, the landowning aristocrat who searches for a higher meaning in life. But whereas Levin found his answers in love, family life, and nature, Tolstoy sought out a deeper meaning in his later years, turning away from luxury, property, and pleasures for, in his mind, a more holy and just existence.

Count Leo Nicolaevich Tolstoy was born on September 10, 1828, the fourth of five children, to wealthy noble parents. He lived at the family estate, Yasnaya Polyana ("clear glade"), south of Moscow. Orphaned at 9, Tolstoy was brought up by relatives and educated by French and German tutors. At 16, he entered the University of Kazan, where he studied languages and law, though he showed far more interest in gambling, drinking, and women. He was by no means a social success: his stiff awkwardness led his friends to nickname him "the bear." Eventually influenced by the writings of French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tolstoy became disenchanted with formal education and left the university in 1847 without a degree.

Tolstoy returned that year to Yasnaya Polyana, now his legal inheritance. Along with 2100 acres came 233 male serfs, bonded laborers whose back-breaking work gave him his livelihood. For his day, the young Tolstoy had a fairly liberal attitude toward his serfs: he reasoned that as long as he treated them well, ownership was fair.

Serfs in Tolstoy's day led wretched lives. Though the majority of the Russian population was made up of rural workers—96.4% in 1797, 87.4% in 1897—minority landowners ran their lives. Beatings were the most common form of training and discipline. The vast majority of serfs were uneducated and lived in squalid conditions. They were not legally allowed to hold local or international passports, so they could not seek out better lives elsewhere. Punishment for being discovered outside one's legal environs included beatings, fines, and exile.

Tolstoy tried to improve his serfs' lot in life, but failed miserably. He would later record these deeds in his novel *A Landowner's Morning*, where a young nobleman abolishes corporal punishment on his estate, provides schooling for his laborers, and lectures them on how to live better lives. The serfs greet his efforts with mistrust and greed, and the landowner soon abandons his efforts. Though these initial attempts at improving the lives of serfs backfired, such benevolence would figure significantly in Tolstoy's later life.

His idealism dashed, Tolstoy temporarily gave up country life in 1848 and left for Moscow and St. Petersburg. For two years he lived the aristocratic life to which he was born, going to countless parties, gambling, and womanizing. Still socially awkward, he scrutinized his own actions in his diaries, and noted with great remorse the emptiness of society life. At this time, he also began to closely observe his high-born urban peers, and felt a great urge to write down what he saw. Thus, Tolstoy's creative life was born. The next year, his first novel, *Childhood*, was published.

Soon after, in 1852, Tolstoy joined his brother Nicolai in the army as a commissioned officer, fighting Tartars along the Chechnian border (a fight still plaguing the region today). The horrors of war had a great impact on Tolstoy—besides the torture each side inflicted on the other, brutality within the Russian ranks was harrowing.

Peasants made up the involuntary enlisted ranks, and, before reforms were enacted in 1863, were forced to serve for twenty-five years, making family life impossible. After the Crimean War, mandatory service was reduced to seven years, though those with bad records served nine. Enlisted men could expect to not see their families during years of service. Training and discipline mostly took the form of beatings and floggings. One of the worst punishments was the "gauntlet," in which a soldier was tied to his gun and forced to run between ranks of men who flogged him, often to death. Another image that deeply impressed Tolstoy was that of Russian officers shot to death by their own soldiers in battle.

Tolstoy was also horrified by governmental use of the military to quell peasant riots. In such cases, the government essentially forced peasants to oppress other peasants. Such violence often ended in hangings and shootings of rural laborers who fought for legal rights and basics such as food.

Tolstoy spent the rest of his life fighting social inequities, beginning with education for rural laborers. In 1859, now back at Yasnaya Polyana, he opened a school for peasant children and succeeded by creating a relaxed atmosphere in which students didn't fear their masters. Tolstoy and the staff, many with radical inclinations, dressed in peasant garb so as not to intimidate students. Tolstoy's *ABC* text was used instead of government-

issued books, an innovation that authorities frowned upon. Beginning in 1857, Tolstoy traveled extensively, studying progressive school systems and other forms of organization, whether governmental or societal. He became enormously unpopular with both landowners and the government for championing the rights of peasants, and faced several investigations and at least one police raid on his home.

Tolstoy briefly interrupted his travels to be at his brother Nicolai's side as he lay dying in France. Tolstoy was greatly affected by his brother's death; a sense of futility in life—as well as terror of death—began to slowly invade his thoughts.

In 1865, Tolstoy began publishing in serial form *War and Peace*, his great epic of five Russian families during the Napoleonic Wars (1805–1814). For four years he chronicled with great detail and precision the poignant psychological and social aspects of the war years on Russian society. Of war, he wrote:

> *Millions of men perpetrated against one another such innumerable crimes, frauds, treacheries, thefts, forgeries, issues of false money, burglaries, incendiarisms, and murders as in whole centuries are not recorded in the annals of all the law courts of the world, but which those who committed them did not at the time regard as being crimes.*

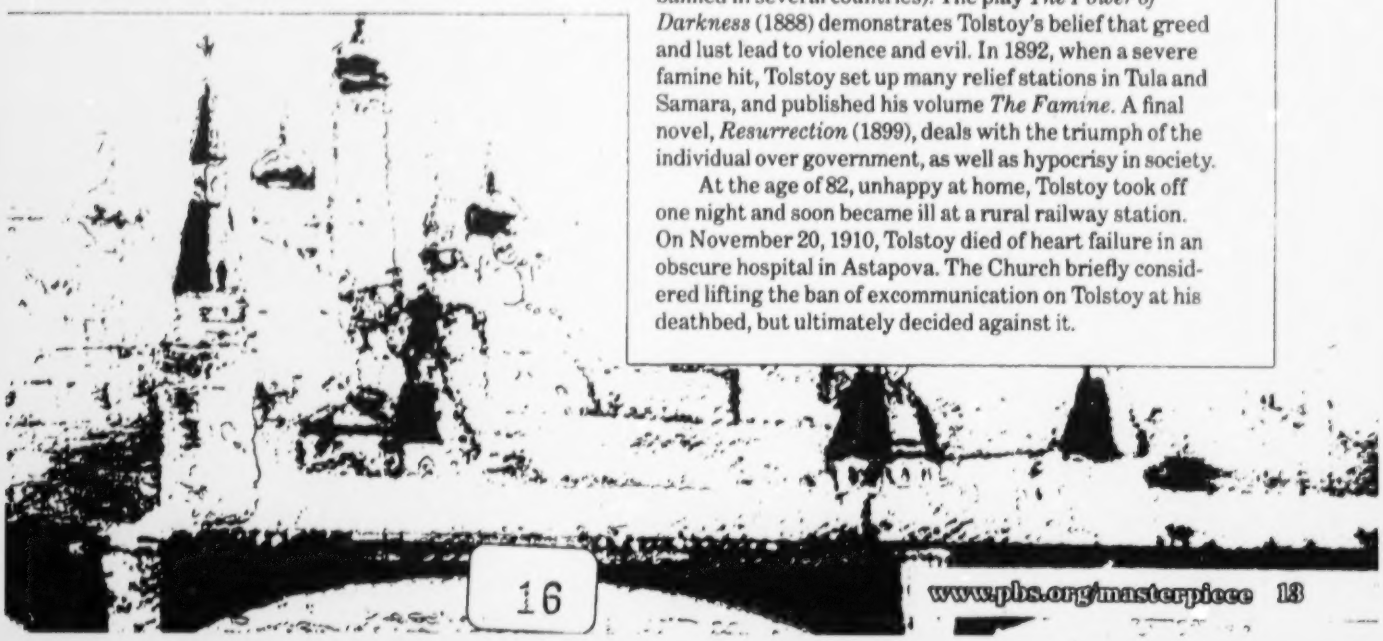
In 1862, Tolstoy married Sofya Andreyevna Behrs, whom he called "Sonya." The first fifteen years of marriage proved blissfully happy for Tolstoy, who found great comfort, joy, and satisfaction in family life (much as Levin does at the end of *Anna Karenina*). He noted in his diary on January 5, 1862, "Domestic happiness has swallowed me completely." It was during these contented years that Tolstoy produced both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. Together he and Sonya had thirteen children (three of whom died in childhood), and Sonya worked lovingly at copying over Tolstoy's final drafts. But things between them would change.

In the 1870s, Tolstoy slowly began a moral crisis and depression that would last the rest of his life. He remained haunted by death, and desperately sought out greater meaning in life. Never very religious, he now found great personal significance in Christ's injunction, "that ye shall resist not evil." Nonresistance, or peacefulness in the face of violence, became the cornerstone of his life. Tolstoy also arrived at the idea that self-gratification corrupted man's inherent goodness, and that therefore property rights—owning "things that belong to all"—were evil. He wanted to give all his land away, but ultimately parceled it out to his family, who largely opposed his altruistic ideas. In his quest for a holy life, Tolstoy also became a vegetarian; abstained from sex, alcohol, and tobacco; worked on his farms; wore only peasant clothing; and even made his own shoes. His family, particularly his wife, was extremely unhappy with his conversion, with the exception of his daughter Alexandra who shared many of her father's beliefs.

After his conversion, Tolstoy renounced his earlier fiction as "trash" written for the cultural elite, and turned to writing essays and tracts. In his 1882 "Confession," he speaks candidly of his moral crisis, and in the 1886 pamphlet "What Then Shall We Do?" he inveighs against property ownership and the exploitation of labor. In 1894, he published "The Kingdom of God Is Within You," describing his personal religious findings; in 1901 he was excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church. "What Is Art?" written in 1898, dismisses all but morally inspired art that could appeal to the average citizen. Though Tolstoy made many bureaucratic enemies, he also found many followers, several of whom sought him out as a prophet.

In his last years, Tolstoy turned back to fiction, writing morality tales and plays. "Master and Man" (1885) and "The Death of Ivan Ilych" (1886), two of his best known short stories, portray men seeking spiritual conversion upon their deathbeds. The short novel *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889) describes a loveless marriage (and was banned in several countries). The play *The Power of Darkness* (1888) demonstrates Tolstoy's belief that greed and lust lead to violence and evil. In 1892, when a severe famine hit, Tolstoy set up many relief stations in Tula and Samara, and published his volume *The Famine*. A final novel, *Resurrection* (1899), deals with the triumph of the individual over government, as well as hypocrisy in society.

At the age of 82, unhappy at home, Tolstoy took off one night and soon became ill at a rural railway station. On November 20, 1910, Tolstoy died of heart failure in an obscure hospital in Astapova. The Church briefly considered lifting the ban of excommunication on Tolstoy at his deathbed, but ultimately decided against it.



The Woman Question

Why did author Leo Tolstoy make his character Anna Karenina such a tragic figure? What message did he mean to send his readers? Literary critics and historians have been trying to answer this question since his great novel was first published in 1874.

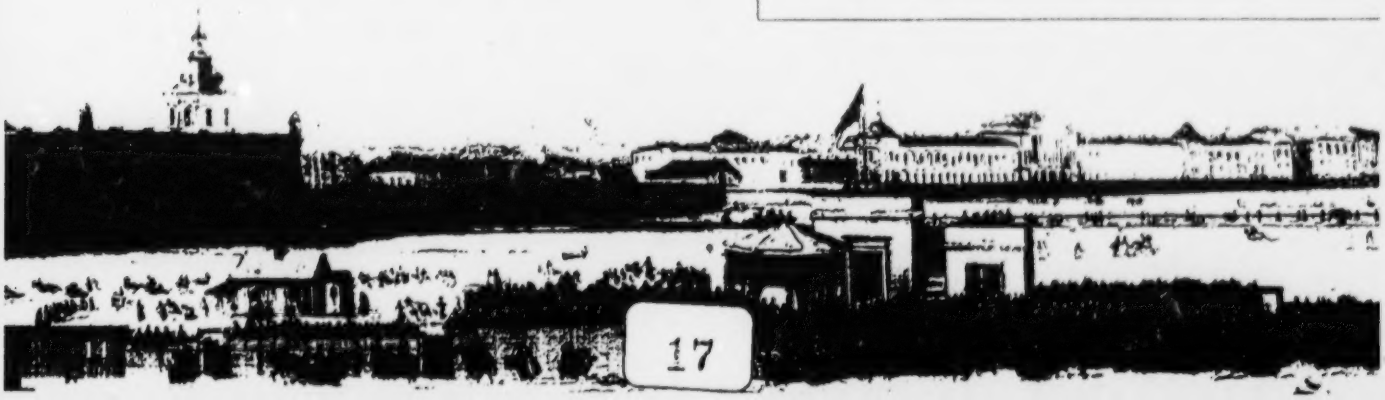
One answer might lie in the plight of women in early- and mid-19th-century Russia. Like the majority of her European counterparts, a Russian woman's father and husband controlled most aspects of her life. Even noblewomen, as portrayed by Anna, could not vote, hold their own passports, or attend high schools or universities—secondary education was unavailable to women until the 1850s, and higher education was unavailable until the 1870s. What little education high-born women received was largely vocational, amounting to skills in marriage, housekeeping, and motherhood. Noble Russian women did enjoy one legal right not held by most other European women: they could hold property.

Marriage was the career goal of the Russian woman, though she would find it ultimately a restrictive, confining institution. Among nobility, matches were often arranged through parents, who chose husbands from the same class or better, seeking aristocratic backgrounds that would add to a family's social and financial status. Character was of lesser importance, if considered at all. It was not uncommon for women to select their own husbands, though they were expected to choose from upper-class men they met at social occasions such as parties and balls organized by relatives for that purpose. Once married, a wife's duties were to take care of her husband, preside over the household, and bear children. The 1836 Code of Russian Laws stated, "The woman must obey her husband, reside with him in love, respect, and unlimited obedience, and offer him every pleasantness and affection as the ruler of the household." Husbands determined when their wives traveled, conducted business, studied with tutors (perhaps French or literature, though not in academic terms), or gained employment (extremely rare). Many dictated daily activities, such as deciding when wives could leave the house. Children were the property of a woman's husband, even if she had a child with another man via an adulterous affair.

One female Russian writer of the mid-19th century, Elena Gan, expressed what many must have felt. "Truly, it sometimes seems that God's world has been created for men alone; the universe is open to them, with all its mysteries; for them there are words, the arts and knowledge; for them there is freedom and all the joys of life. From the cradle a woman is fettered by the chains of decency."

Such legal inequality sprang from the Russian ideal of women up to and during this time. "Decency" was the key word: women were seen as either chaste or impure, and impure women were worthless. Russian society dictated that men marry well-behaved virgins. Once married, women were viewed as child-bearers living under a patriarch's rule; obedience replaced chastity as the utmost requirement. Those who strayed outside the rules were seen as "unnatural" and were treated harshly, whether with violence or social casting-out. This attitude prevailed in most European societies, and had some roots in organized religion. The Russian book *Domostroi*, or *Household Arrangements*, written by a 17th-century monk named Sylvester, advocated methods of wife-beating for those women who disobeyed; his only admonishment was to go easy on pregnant women for the sake of the unborn child. He also advised against damaging a women's eyes, because a blind wife wouldn't be able to carry out her tasks.

In 1861, the serfs of Russia—some 80% of the population—were freed, and at about this time Russian intellectuals became more interested in the plight of women in society, or what they called the "woman question." In Russia, the search for an answer was taken up largely by writers, the majority of whom were male; most women remained uneducated. Russian writers were often seen as prophets—the lack of political freedom and discussion under a succession of totalitarian tsars made their voices all the more necessary. Art critic John Berger once commented, "In Russian art, there is an emphasis on truth and purpose rather than on aesthetic pleasure. Russians expect their artists to be prophets because they think of themselves as subjects of prophecy." Russian writers such as Tolstoy worked with great seriousness of purpose at exposing injustices, and were often frowned upon by authorities. (Late in his career, Tolstoy was actually monitored by the government, and his belongings were searched for possible threatening materials.) The modern author Alexander Solzhenitsyn referred to his Russian literary counterparts as "an alternative government."



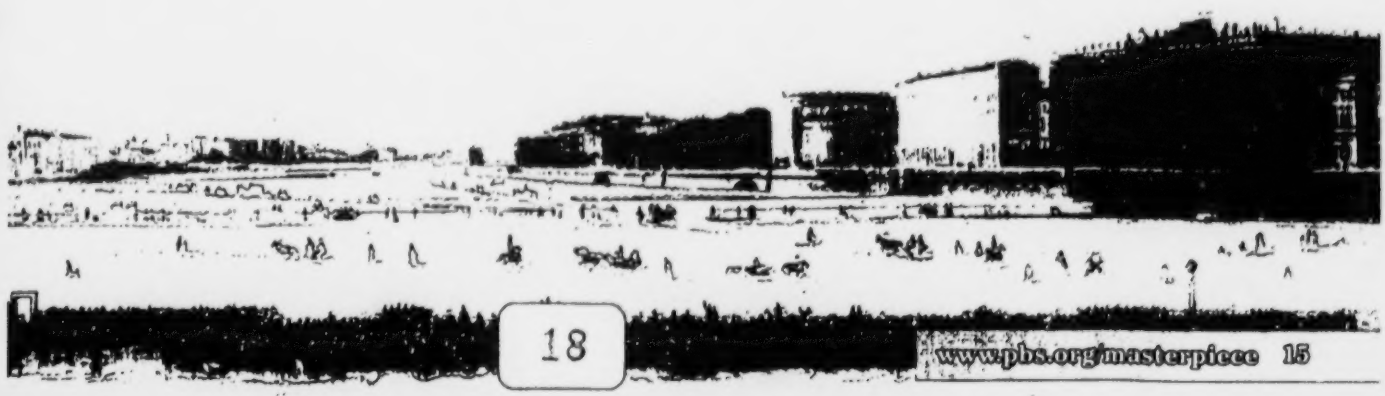
Tolstoy chose to discuss the "woman question" framed in a comparison: he contrasted Anna's search for meaning in life with that of Levin, the Tolstoy stand-in character. And Tolstoy did something shocking for his time: he made Anna—an adulteress—a sympathetic character. Anna wasn't unhappy because she disobeyed her insufferable, stifling husband and had to be punished; she was unhappy because she didn't find, in Tolstoy's eyes, meaningful love. Tolstoy believed, at the time he wrote *Anna Karenina*, that true love and happiness could be achieved only through a marriage of equals. Anna finds temporary happiness outside marriage; ultimately, however, her lack of independence and social inequality within an adulterous relationship cause her grief. Tolstoy contrasts Anna's story with his character Levin, an enlightened man who succeeded in his quest for meaning in life by choosing a wife he considered his partner rather than his subordinate. Throughout the book, Tolstoy shed much light on hypocrisy in society, particularly the double standard under which men could stray in marriage without punishment whereas women could not. He also described a "don't ask, don't tell" policy among many high-born adulterers, including discreet women who cast Anna out of their circle for actions similar to their own.

Though Russian male writers were the most public voices arguing for legal and social equality between the sexes, female reformers began to organize around midcentury. The groups that emerged are often divided by historians into three categories: feminists, nihilists, and radicals. Most members of all three groups were from the upper class, though the growing stream of women into the workplace after the liberation of the serfs and the start of the industrial age saw a slow but steady change in social status among female reformers.

Feminists sought not revolution, but legal equality and reform by women on behalf of women. They achieved much: charity for poverty-stricken women, the eventual opening of universities and medical schools to women, and self-direction in a country that saw little. Mostly nobility, they believed specifically in greater independence for women of their own class, with assistance to women in lower classes (shop girls, prostitutes, and orphans were some of their charity cases).

Nihilists, influenced by numerous male counterparts, wanted to overturn all accepted values, including those of everyday life. They, too, sought greater independence for women, though not through government channels. Nihilists expressed their opinions not in political or intellectual groups, but in ordinary actions: they wore their hair short, smoked cigarettes in public, and disdained religion, the family, and societal hierarchy, among other things. Many moved away from family life into communes in bigger cities such as St. Petersburg and Moscow, where they enjoyed greater freedom in choosing what they did and when they did it. Some moved on to radicalism and terrorism, though others treated nihilism more as fashion—much like many fads today. Often feminists and radicals accused nihilists of being out for themselves, criticizing a perceived lack of interest in the greater good.

Radical women took part in a revolutionary movement, actively trying to overthrow the government. Starting up in the 1860s, they at first took secondary roles to men such as that of messengers and recruiters. By the 1870s, however, they'd moved into factories and villages, inciting riots and spreading propaganda. Many got into legal trouble, with hundreds arrested, jailed, and exiled to Siberia. One female radical, Vera Zasulich, began an "era of assassination" by shooting at police in Moscow in 1877. Another radical, Sofya Perovskaya, led the riot against the Tsar that ended in his murder in March 1881. She and her cohorts were hanged.



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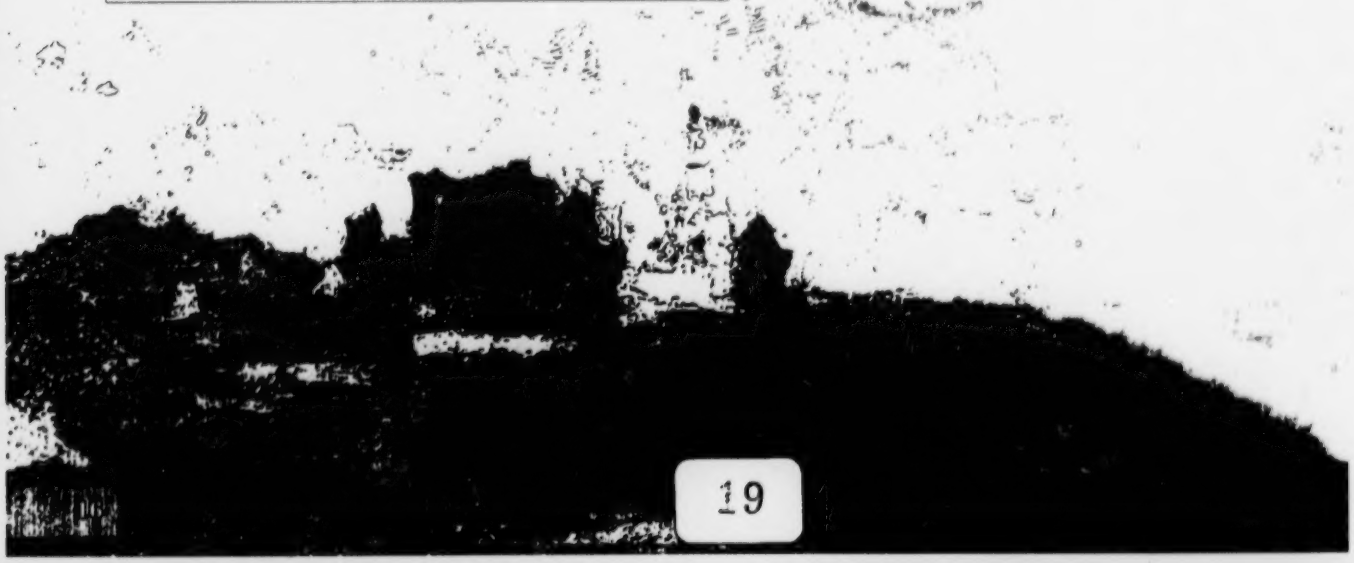

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